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SENATE MEMORIAL 73

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009

INTRODUCED BY

Pete Campos

A MEMORIAL

ASKING THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO URGE
PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA TO AWARD THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF
FREEDOM TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL MIGUEL ENCINIAS FOR HIS
MERITORIOUS SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES.

WHEREAS, Miguel Encinias was born and raised in Las Vegas,
New Mexico, the youngest of sixteen children; and

WHEREAS, he joined the New Mexico national guard in 1939,
between his junior and senior year in high school, when he was
only sixteen years old; and

WHEREAS, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, when President
Roosevelt issued an urgent call for pilots, Miguel applied to
the cadet academy for flight training and graduated as an air
force pilot and officer in 1943; and

WHEREAS, he flew sixty-nine missions in North Africa,

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1 Sicily and Corsica, and he was shot down, wounded and captured
2 by the German army; and

3 WHEREAS, he spent fifteen months in a German prison camp
4 on the Baltic coast and was released upon the liberation of
5 Europe by the allies; and

6 WHEREAS, following the war, he enrolled in Georgetown
7 university's school of foreign services, and after graduating
8 from Georgetown, he went to France to study, where he was
9 awarded the equivalent of a master's degree in political
10 science; and

11 WHEREAS, at the onset of the Korean Conflict, Miguel
12 Encinias requested active duty status with the United States
13 air force, and he flew over one hundred missions during that
14 war; and

15 WHEREAS, on his sixty-fifth mission, he was shot down,
16 rescued by helicopter, hospitalized and treated for his wounds;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, upon recovery and convalescence, he returned to
19 his squadron and continued to fly missions until the end of the
20 war; and

21 WHEREAS, following the Korean Conflict, Miguel was
22 selected to be the director of a project that trained pilots
23 from other countries to be fighter pilots and, subsequently, he
24 became a French teacher at the United States air force academy;
25 and

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1 WHEREAS, during the Vietnam Conflict, he once again
2 volunteered for active duty and flew more than sixty combat
3 missions while also serving as a French advisor in that
4 country; and

5 WHEREAS, toward the end of his military career, Miguel
6 Encinias was honored, receiving two commendations for his
7 accomplishments, one by the chief of staff of the air force and
8 the other by the chief of the military assistance advisory
9 group in Spain; and

10 WHEREAS, after retiring from the military as a lieutenant
11 colonel, he enrolled in the university of New Mexico, from
12 which he was awarded a doctor of philosophy degree in Spanish
13 and Latin American literature and education; and

14 WHEREAS, he pursued a second career as a university
15 professor, teaching French and Spanish at western New Mexico
16 university, and he was the director of bilingual programs for
17 the Albuquerque public schools; and

18 WHEREAS, in 1993, he was appointed by President Bill
19 Clinton to be a member of the World War II advisory board, and
20 he served on that board for seven years; and

21 WHEREAS, during his illustrious military career, Miguel
22 was recognized and honored with three distinguished flying
23 crosses, two purple hearts and fourteen air medals; and

24 WHEREAS, Miguel Encinias is the only Hispanic in the
25 United States, and one of only five pilots, to have flown

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1 combat missions in three wars: World War II, the Korean
2 Conflict and the Vietnam Conflict; and

3 WHEREAS, the presidential medal of freedom is the nation's
4 highest civilian award, recognizing exceptional meritorious
5 service, both in war and in peacetime; and

6 WHEREAS, Miguel Encinias has distinguished himself by a
7 lifetime of service to his country, and he deserves
8 consideration for the nation's highest civilian award;

9 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
10 OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico congressional delegation be
11 requested to urge President Barack Obama to award the
12 presidential medal of freedom to Lieutenant Colonel Miguel
13 Encinias for his meritorious service to the United States; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
15 transmitted to the members of the New Mexico congressional
16 delegation.

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